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Sanborn Supports Sewer and Water Authority Legislation

Bill Provides a Voice for Suburban Residents

(LANSING) – In order to ensure a safe, secure and cost efficient water supply for south east Michigan residents, state Senator Alan Sanborn, R-Richmond, strongly supported legislation that will provide suburban communities oversight of water and sewer services.

“The intent of this legislation is to allow oversight of a system that provides service to approximately 43 percent of Michigan’s residents, most of whom live in Macomb, Oakland and out-county Wayne,” Sanborn said. “I think the residents for whom this system has been developed and who pay for its operation, deserve to be afforded more oversight representation and information relating to rate setting, contracts and security.”

The legislation, SB 195 sponsored by Senator Laura Toy, will create a board to provide public service commission type review of rate establishment and awarding of contracts by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Board.

The new five member authority will consist of: one appointed member from each: Macomb, Oakland, and Genesee counties, who will be appointed by their county board of commissioners; one member from Wayne County appointed by the Mayor of Detroit, with the advice and consent of the Detroit City Council; and one from Wayne County appointed the mayors of the five largest cities (excluding Detroit) in Wayne County.

“These systems provide services to almost half of Michigan residents,” Sanborn said. “Most of southeastern Michigan has been designing and building infrastructure to operate this system for decades and this legislation will allow them a little piece of mind regarding how it is managed.”

The new board will have review and disapproval authority of contracts and rate increases only. It will not assume ownership of facilities or infrastructure and will not have the power to hire or fire workers nor make decisions on managerial issues.

“I commend my fellow Macomb County lawmakers for their teamwork in making this legislation a reality, especially Representative Leon Drolet who introduced similar legislation,” Sanborn said. “Leon’s bill ran simultaneously with the Toy bill, and though Laura’s was the one selected to be sent forward for the Governor’s signature, it is a better bill for incorporating portions of the Drolet legislation.”